



General Assembly

January Session, 2015

Committee Bill No. 5357

LCO No. 3728



Referred to Committee on HUMAN SERVICES

Introduced by:
(HS)

AN ACT INCREASING ACCESS TO CHILD CARE SUBSIDIES FOR WORKING FAMILIES.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 17b-749 of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

3 (a) The Commissioner of Early Childhood shall establish and
4 operate a child care subsidy program to increase the availability,
5 affordability and quality of child care services for families (1) with a
6 parent or caretaker who is working, [or] attending high school, or, to
7 advance career prospects, is enrolled in an institution of higher
8 education, as defined in section 31-222, or a training program, or (2)
9 who [receives] receive cash assistance under the temporary family
10 assistance program from the Department of Social Services and have a
11 parent or caretaker relative who is participating in an approved
12 education, training or other job preparation activity. Services available
13 under the child care program shall include the provision of child care
14 subsidies for children under the age of thirteen or children under the
15 age of nineteen with special needs. The Office of Early Childhood shall
16 open and maintain enrollment for the child care subsidy program and

17 shall administer such program within the existing budgetary resources
18 available. The office shall issue a notice on the office's Internet web site
19 and shall provide written notice to recipients of program benefits and
20 to service providers any time the office closes the program to new
21 applications, changes eligibility requirements, changes program
22 benefits or makes any other change to the program's status or terms,
23 provided the office shall not be required to issue such notice when the
24 office expands program eligibility. Any change in the office's
25 acceptance of new applications, eligibility requirements, program
26 benefits or any other change to the program's status or terms for which
27 the office is required to give notice pursuant to this subsection, shall
28 not be effective until thirty days after the office issues such notice.

29 (b) The [commissioner] Commissioner of Early Childhood shall
30 establish income standards for applicants and recipients at a level to
31 include a family with gross income up to fifty per cent of the state-
32 wide median income, except [the commissioner (1) may increase the
33 income level to up to seventy-five per cent of the state-wide median
34 income, (2) upon] that a family whose gross income increases to not
35 more than seventy-five per cent of the state-wide median income after
36 an initial eligibility determination shall remain eligible for the
37 program. Upon the request of the [Commissioner] Department of
38 Children and Families, the commissioner may waive the income
39 standards for adoptive families so that children adopted on or after
40 October 1, 1999, from the Department of Children and Families are
41 eligible for the child care subsidy program. [, and (3) on] On and after
42 March 1, 2003, the commissioner shall reduce the initial income
43 eligibility level to up to fifty-five per cent of the state-wide median
44 income for applicants and recipients who qualify based on their loss of
45 eligibility for temporary family assistance. [The commissioner may
46 adopt regulations in accordance with chapter 54 to establish income
47 criteria and durational requirements for such waiver of income
48 standards.]

49 (c) The [commissioner] Commissioner of Early Childhood, in

50 consultation with the [Commissioner] Department of Social Services,
51 shall establish eligibility and program standards including, but not
52 limited to: (1) A priority intake and eligibility system with preference
53 given to serving (A) recipients of temporary family assistance who are
54 employed or engaged in employment activities under the Department
55 of Social Services' "Jobs First" program, (B) working families whose
56 temporary family assistance was discontinued not more than five years
57 prior to the date of application for the child care subsidy program, (C)
58 teen parents, (D) low-income working families, (E) adoptive families of
59 children who were adopted from the Department of Children and
60 Families and who are granted a waiver of income standards under
61 [subdivision (2) of] subsection (b) of this section, (F) working families
62 who are at risk of welfare dependency, and (G) any household with a
63 child or children participating in the Early Head Start-Child Care
64 Partnership federal grant program for a period of up to twelve months
65 based on Early Head Start eligibility criteria; (2) health and safety
66 standards for child care providers not required to be licensed; (3) a
67 reimbursement system for child care services [which account] that
68 accounts for differences in the age of the child, number of children in
69 the family, the geographic region and type of care provided by
70 licensed and unlicensed caregivers, the cost and type of services
71 provided by licensed and unlicensed caregivers, successful completion
72 of fifteen hours of annual in-service training or credentialing of child
73 care directors and administrators, and program accreditation; (4)
74 supplemental payment for special needs of the child and extended
75 nontraditional hours; (5) an annual rate review process for providers,
76 which assures that reimbursement rates are maintained at levels
77 [which] that permit equal access to a variety of child care settings; (6) a
78 sliding reimbursement scale for participating families; (7) an
79 administrative appeals process; (8) an administrative hearing process
80 to adjudicate cases of alleged fraud and abuse and to impose sanctions
81 and recover overpayments; (9) an extended period of program and
82 payment eligibility when a parent who is receiving a child care
83 subsidy experiences a temporary interruption in employment or other

84 approved activity; and (10) a waiting list for the child care subsidy
85 program that reflects the priority and eligibility system set forth in
86 subdivision (1) of this subsection, which [is] shall be reviewed
87 periodically, with the inclusion of this information in the annual report
88 required to be issued annually by the office to the Governor and the
89 General Assembly in accordance with section 17b-733. Such [action
90 will] report shall include, but not be limited to, family income, age of
91 child, region of state and length of time on such waiting list.

92 (d) [(1)] Not later than [January 1, 2011] July 1, 2015, an applicant
93 determined to be eligible for program benefits shall remain eligible for
94 such benefits for a period of not less than [eight] twelve months from
95 the date that such applicant is determined to be eligible, provided the
96 [Commissioner of Social Services] Commissioner of Early Childhood
97 has not determined, during such [eight-month] twelve-month period,
98 that the applicant's circumstances have changed so as to render the
99 applicant ineligible for program benefits. The [Commissioner of Social
100 Services] commissioner shall not make an eligibility determination for
101 a recipient of program benefits more than one time per [eight-month]
102 twelve-month period. [, except as provided in subsection (f) of this
103 section.

104 (2) On and after July 1, 2014, the Commissioner of Early Childhood
105 shall succeed the Commissioner of Social Services for the purpose of
106 making the eligibility determinations pursuant to subdivision (1) of
107 this subsection.]

108 (e) Within available appropriations, a recipient of program benefits
109 who takes unpaid leave from such recipient's employment due to the
110 birth or impending birth of a child shall be granted not more than six
111 weeks of payment eligibility during the leave if: (1) The recipient
112 intends to return to work at the end of the unpaid leave; (2) the
113 recipient verifies that eligibility is needed to prevent the loss of a slot
114 in a school-based program or licensed child care setting; and (3) the
115 child receiving child care services under the program continues to

116 attend the program during the recipient's leave.

117 [(f) (1) Not later than October 15, 2011, the Commissioner of Social
118 Services shall submit a report, in accordance with the provisions of
119 section 11-4a, to the joint standing committees of the General
120 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to human services and
121 appropriations and the budgets of state agencies concerning eligibility
122 redeterminations made on an eight-month basis. Such report shall
123 include an analysis of overpayments of program benefits made by the
124 Department of Social Services and administrative costs incurred by the
125 department as a result of eligibility redeterminations made on an
126 eight-month basis. On and after October 15, 2011, and until June 30,
127 2014, the Commissioner of Social Services may make eligibility
128 redeterminations on a six-month basis if, after January 1, 2011, the
129 department's overpayments of program benefits have increased in
130 comparison with the period between January 1, 2010, and December
131 31, 2010, as a result of having an eight-month eligibility
132 redetermination period.]

133 [(2)] (f) On and after July 1, ~~[2014]~~ 2016, and annually thereafter, the
134 Commissioner of Early Childhood shall submit a report, in accordance
135 with the provisions of section 11-4a, to the joint standing committees of
136 the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to
137 children, education, human services and appropriations concerning
138 eligibility redeterminations made on ~~[an eight-month]~~ a twelve-month
139 basis. Such report shall include an analysis of overpayments of
140 program benefits made by the office and administrative costs incurred
141 by the office as a result of eligibility redeterminations made on ~~[an~~
142 ~~eight-month]~~ a twelve-month basis. ~~[On and after July 1, 2014, the~~
143 ~~commissioner may make eligibility redeterminations on a six-month~~
144 ~~basis if the office's overpayments of program benefits have increased~~
145 ~~in comparison with the period between January 1, 2010, and December~~
146 ~~31, 2010, as a result of having an eight-month eligibility~~
147 ~~redetermination period.]~~

148 (g) A provider under the child care subsidy program that qualifies
 149 for eligibility and subsequently receives payment for child care
 150 services for recipients under this section shall be reimbursed for such
 151 services until informed by the office of the recipient's ineligibility.

152 (h) All licensed child care providers and those providers exempt
 153 from licensing shall provide the office with the following information
 154 in order to maintain eligibility for reimbursement: (1) The name,
 155 address, appropriate identification, Social Security number and
 156 telephone number of the provider and all adults who work for or
 157 reside at the location where care is provided; (2) the name and address
 158 of the child's doctor, primary care provider and health insurance
 159 company; (3) whether the child is immunized and has had health
 160 screens pursuant to the federal Early and Periodic Screening,
 161 Diagnostic and Treatment Services Program under 42 USC 1396d; and
 162 (4) the number of children cared for by the provider.

163 (i) On or after July 1, 2014, the [commissioner] Commissioner of
 164 Early Childhood shall adopt regulations, in accordance with the
 165 provisions of chapter 54, to implement the provisions of this section.

166 (j) The [commissioner] Commissioner of Early Childhood shall
 167 submit to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly
 168 having cognizance of matters relating to children, education, human
 169 services and appropriations and the budgets of state agencies a copy of
 170 the Child Care and Development Fund Plan that the commissioner
 171 submits to the Administration for Children and Families pursuant to
 172 federal law. [The] A copy of the plan shall be submitted to the
 173 committees not later than thirty days after submission of the plan to
 174 the Administration for Children and Families.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	17b-749
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Statement of Purpose:

To change eligibility redetermination periods in conformance with federal law and to extend eligibility for parents whose income increases after their initial eligibility determination or who are attending educational or training courses to advance their careers.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]

Co-Sponsors: REP. ROSATI, 44th Dist.; REP. ABERCROMBIE, 83rd Dist.
REP. LOPES, 24th Dist.

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